

## **Election of LI College of Fellows Chair**

### **Candidate Statement**

I am a Board Director and Head of Design at LUC one of the UK's leading landscape design consultancies founded in 1966. I have direct responsibility for the management of LUC's operations and in particular the 50 strong Design business unit which operates nationwide. LUC's total work force is 160 staff with professional staff in the following disciplines: landscape design, landscape management, landscape assessment, planning, ecology and graphic design.

I am responsible for the business planning, promotion and direction of LUC's design portfolio; however the great majority of my working week is involved with design consultancy work for a wide range of public and private clients. I commenced my education as a landscape architect at Manchester Polytechnic in 1979 and I have been part of the LUC team for over 30 years providing a holistic approach to the design, assessment, protection, conservation and enhancement of landscape and townscape. I was elected a Fellow of the LI in 2017.

In terms of my aspirations for the LI College of Fellows, Fellowship is the LI's highest grade of membership and for those who have made a major contribution to the profession. However presently the FLI badge is not widely understood and we will need to work hard to seek wider recognition both within and outside the profession. Fellows and prospective fellows should be widely known and respected in the industry for their expertise, and membership should be an aspiration, rather than a little known sub-group of the LI.

### **Influence**

Landscape architects provide a holistic approach to the assessment, protection, conservation and enhancement of landscapes, which takes account of environmental, social and economic conditions. It is these skills which set us apart from the other construction professionals, who seek to offer similar services.

Our members skilfully deal with the increasingly complex relationships between the built and natural environments. Working with clients, architects, engineers and other professionals, our members play a pivotal role in environmental protection by designing and implementing projects that respect both the needs of clients, users and of our environment.

Whilst improving and controlling the quality of our membership we also need to publicise the benefits of our work to a much broader national audience. The LI must promote our skills more widely, especially our ability in combating contemporary issues such as mitigating and adapting our environment to climate change, and ensuring the future sustainability of landscapes and communities within them.

## **Relevance**

I understand how our professionals operate and firmly believe in pushing the boundaries of the landscape profession. There is plenty of worthy guidance on green infrastructure, place-making and the design of the public realm, however as a profession we need to think outside our 'comfort zone' in order to achieve a better quality environment for all.

More than ever the LI and its members will need to be creating employment opportunities, whilst also contributing to and leading multi-disciplinary teams as economic constraints mix with rapidly-changing expectations from clients and the public. Having lead LUC at the most senior level, I believe I offer a realistic and holistic understanding of how the profession should both survive and develop, and the way in which we can demonstrate our relevance to C21st society.

## **Inclusive Growth**

The LI needs to grow and reach out to a much wider audience, many of whom are unaware that we even exist. Indeed the LI is primarily white and middle-class, and historically has not been very welcoming to those beyond that niche; we need to do much more to diversify our membership.

At LUC we have been successfully improving equality both within the wider profession and our practice for some years now. We have launched an enhanced agile working policy to promote flexibility and have pioneered, with the Landscape Institute, the advertising of job vacancies in a dedicated 'Flexible' category. Making flexible working arrangements available to everyone from day one, improves opportunities for career progression for everyone; it will help to close the Gender Pay Gap, improve post-maternity retention of women in the profession and support working families of all ages and types.

Adopting a policy of offering only paid work experience and internship placements, advertising and committing to paying the Real Living Wage for such placements addresses social inequality in access to professional careers. LUC is participating in the Landscape Institute's Apprenticeship Trailblazer in order to create new, potentially more affordable or accessible routes into the profession. Importantly we aim to offer staff of all grades a rewarding, inclusive and challenging career within the practice.

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